



Date of Meeting: December 3, 2015

**TOWN OF LEESBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MEMO**

Subject: TLZM-2013-0006, Crescent Parke

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Proposal: **Rezoning Application:** An application to rezone approximately 29 acres from the CD-C (Crescent District-Commercial) and the CD-MUO (Crescent District-Mixed-Use Option) to the CD-RH (Crescent District-Residential High Density); and to rezone approximately two (2) acres from CD-OS (Crescent District-Open Space) to CD-RH. Within the CD-C and CD-MUO districts, the application includes up to 163,625 square feet of nonresidential uses to include: a maximum of 112,500 square feet of office uses, a maximum of 141,125 square feet of retail uses, inclusive of a hotel use subject to a future special exception application and 96 multifamily dwelling units. Within the CD-RH, the application includes 96 stacked townhouses (two-over-two) and 209 conventional townhouses. The application includes several zoning modifications which affect building architecture and site design.

Recommendations: In preparation of a January public hearing, Staff requests direction from the Planning Commission regarding items identified in this staff memo.

Web Link: A comprehensive listing of all application documents is found here:
<http://www.leesburgva.gov/government/departments/planning-zoning/liam-interactive-applications-map>

- I. Review Summary:** On August 20, 2015 the Planning Commission forwarded recommendations of denial to the Town Council for:
- Town Plan Amendment application TLTA-2014-0001, and
 - Zoning Text Amendment TLOA 2015-0002, and
 - Rezoning application TLZM 2013-0006

Town Council held its public hearing on the referenced applications on October 13, 2015 and continued discussion to the November 9th Council Work Session. On November 10, 2015, the Town Council took the following actions:

- **TLTA-2014-0001, Adopted:** By Resolution 2015-135, the planned land use for a portion of the subject property was changed from Commercial Mixed-Use to Residential and Davis Avenue Extended was reclassified as a Through Collector Road.
- **TLOA-2015-0002, Approved:** By Ordinance 2015-O-019, the Zoning Ordinance Section 7.10.11.A.2(a) was revised to eliminate Davis Avenue as an Urban Boulevard.
- **TLZM-2013-0006, Remanded:** By motion, the rezoning application was remanded to the Planning Commission for resolution of issues associated with the Concept Plan and Proffers.

The purpose of the December 3, 2015 Work Session is to:

- Summarize unresolved issues; and
- Present conceptual changes to the Concept Plan; and
- Solicit Planning Commission direction in preparation of a January public hearing.

The applicant may consider feedback provided by the Planning Commission on December 3rd and make changes to the concept plan and/or proffers. This discussion will be for a January 2016 public hearing.

II. Unresolved Issues: The Town Council remanded the application back to the Planning Commission in order to allow full discussion of the entire application, the concept plan and proffers. Council members did identify issues that concerned them, such as:

- Overall residential density
- Minimal buffering
- Tree save
- Traffic mitigation

While these concerns were expressed by individual council members, there was no corporate direction given to the Planning Commission on these concerns.

The Applicant and Staff have met several times since the Town Council's action in preparation of a full resubmission of the concept plan and proffers for a January Public Hearing. Provided with this work session memo is graphic depicting the changes made to the unit types and open space areas south of Tuscarora Creek.

Staff includes, in Attachment 1, the Planning Commission's list of recommendations that were transmitted to Town Council. Because the policy issues have been resolved by Town Council, the Planning Commission's focus should be on the technical zoning and design requirements of the Crescent Design District. The applicable topics from the initial Planning Commission recommendation include:

- Izaak Walton Park Proffers
- School Capital facility contributions exclusive of the Izaak Walton Park purchase
- Limited land disturbance to retain existing trees, proffered tree-save areas
- Two-over-two density reduction
- Attached dwelling unit's rear and side yard appearance
- Varied unit width for each building grouping, not uniform widths
- Appropriate buffers outside the Greenway Extension Reservation
- Decrease residential density by increasing useable open space south of Tuscarora Creek
- Deny parking modifications that reduce parking for residents and visitors

Staff recommends that broader concepts that guide the layout of the development be discussed first. These concepts include:

- Intended Crescent District design versus Planned Development District appearance
- Appropriate tree-save and buffering
- Appropriate amount of usable open space and design

Subsequent discussion should include:

- Phasing
- Proffers

Intended Crescent District Design: The Crescent Design District's zoning standards were developed to accommodate by-right approvals facilitating a more expedient development process. The goal was to codify development standards that promote mixed-use and emphasize attractive building design without the emphasis of specific uses. Prior to the revised planned land use for the Crescent Parke properties, the only single-use residential zoning districts were located adjacent to the Downtown: CD-RM, Residential Medium density, and CD-RH, Residential High density. The intent was to include residential development in support of existing mixed-use development of the Historic District where residential redevelopment potential is limited. The intended character of residential development in the CD-RM and CD-RH is illustrated by examples in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.



Figure 1, Alexandria Virginia (Pendleton Street & N Royal Street)



Figure 2, Alexandria Virginia (Pendleton Street & N Royal Street)

During the December 3rd Work Session staff will elaborate on design characteristics of the Crescent District in comparison to the images in Figures 1 & 2 and existing residential development adjacent to the subject property.

III. Description of Conceptual Changes: The December 3rd Work Session packet includes a graphic that depicts some of the conceptual changes made since the Town Council action. There are subtle changes to the layout that include:

- Reorientation of two-over-two units adjacent to open spaces
- Wider breaks between buildings
- Stronger linkages to the common interior open spaces
- Increased tree-save areas adjacent to the Olde Izaak Walton Park (OIWP) and Greenway Extension Reservation
- Reduction of approximately 26 dwelling units

IV. Planning Commissioner Recommendations: In preparation for the public hearing in January, each Planning Commissioner should consider her or his view on items listed in this section. If a Commissioner thinks of another alternative, it can be proposed during discussion. Staff recommends that straw polls be taken for each item.

V. Work Session Discussion Topics: Staff and the applicant will present their respective perspectives on each of the topics listed below. Discussion questions are prepared to help facilitate Planning Commission discussion.

A. Overall Density:

The Planning Commission and Town Council have made comments concerning the general density of the proposed development south of Tuscarora Creek. At the Planning Commission's June 2015 Public Hearing the application consisted of:

- 96 multi-family units (north of Tuscarora Creek)
- 96 stacked townhouses (south of Tuscarora Creek)
- 209 conventional townhouses.

Based on the acreage of the proposed CD-RH district, the unit per acre ratio was 11.8. The Crescent District's CD-RH subdistrict permits up to 12 dwellings per acre by-right, and up to 24 dwellings per acre with a rezoning.

The Applicant has revised the concept plan and now proposes the following unit mix which results in a unit per acre ratio of 10.9.

- 96 multi-family units (north of Tuscarora Creek)
- 88 stacked townhouses (south of Tuscarora Creek)
- 191 conventional townhouses.

The overall unit count has been reduced by 26 units: 18 townhouses and 8 two-over-tvos.

Staff notes that the proposed density is below the maximum density permitted by-right. Density is defined as the overall number of dwelling units per acre. Staff has noted throughout the review of the application that the Crescent Design District standards did not envision a solely residential development of this proportion without a mixed-use component. The unforeseen complication with a residential development of this size, utilizing the Crescent District standards, is inefficient use of the property in the proposed design. The balance of dwelling unit type and efficient design is not achieved. As illustrated in Figure 3 below, there are three unique development patterns that reflect Crescent District Standards.

- Block 1, located in the upper left portion, has buildings framing the street hiding the required parking. Missing from this block are open/amenity spaces.
- Block 2, located in the middle of the figure, has buildings framing the street, includes hidden parking, but includes amenity spaces that provide design interest and open space.
- Block 3, located at the bottom of the figure, is more suburban in its appearance, but would not meet all the Crescent District standards; but is similar to the Crescent Park layout.



Figure 3, Alexandria block pattern

Staff notes that the “density” of the identified blocks can be uniquely qualified based on efficiency, the number of dwelling units per acre, and the provision of open space/amenity areas.

Staff recommends that the proposed development density should be a product of good design regardless of the number of units in compliance with permitted unit minimums and maximums.

Staff recommends that the design of the development be the focus of the Planning Commission’s discussion; however, a general discussion regarding the number of dwelling units located south of the Tuscarora Creek is necessary.

Discussion Question: Is the Planning Commission satisfied with the reduction of 26 dwelling units most recently made by the applicant or is further redesign and/or reduction of units recommended?

B. Unit Type, Mix of Units & Townhouse Widths:

The Planning Commission previously expressed concern regarding the amount of stacked townhouses or the “two-over-two” unit type. The CD-RH subdistrict permits group homes, multi-family, two-over-twos, and townhouses without a specifying a mix of unit types. Compared to the unit mix that was previously before the Planning Commission, the two-over-two units have been reduced by eight (8) units and the townhouses have been reduced by 18 units.

The Planning Commission previously expressed concern regarding the widths of units in each townhouse grouping or “stick” of units. In the revisions since the Town Council action, some revisions include two or three buildings containing all 20-foot wide units.

Discussion Question: Is the Planning satisfied with the proposed mix of unit types and townhouse widths?

C. Tree-Save Areas:

The Planning Commission and Town Council have expressed concerns regarding the loss of existing tree cover. Staff notes that the permitted densities and design requirements, in addition to the suburban development pattern and unit type, result in mass-grading of the property. The applicant is also required to disturb a major portion of the property adjacent to the Tuscarora Creek to improve flood control and construct the proffered stream restoration. The applicant has included exhibits depicting strategies to retain tree canopy coverage in strategic areas and provide for increased canopy which will be presented at the work session.

Discussion Question: The Planning Commission should opine on the strategies presented by the applicant to address tree canopy retention/coverage and discuss whether additional and/or specific tree save areas are recommended.

D. Buffering:

The Planning Commission and Town Council have expressed concerns regarding appropriate buffering from the proposed Greenway Extension. The Planning Commission expressed that appropriate buffering be provided outside of the reservation area for the Greenway Extension. At the work session, the Planning Commission should provide specific guidance on appropriate buffering strategies. Staff and/or applicant will provide additional detail regarding the units that would be most impacted by the construction of the Greenway Extension.

Discussion Question: Is the Planning Commission generally satisfied with the areas depicted on the concept plan for buffering the proposed residential dwellings or does the Commission recommend that areas depicted on the concept plan be supplemented with a proffered narrative that describes planting density and design and/or buffer widths in certain areas?

E. Active Recreation:

Per the direction of staff, the applicant has provided linkages of the east and west common areas south of Tuscarora Creek to provide better linkage of open space areas. This will help break-up the residential area and afford residents additional pedestrian and outdoor leisure opportunities. Staff views this change as an improvement to help address concerns regarding residential density. Although a larger common area is provided north of the Tuscarora Creek, staff notes the crossing of a potentially heavily trafficked road as an impediment in terms of ease of access. Staff recommends that specific detail be provided in the “programming” of the active recreation areas. There are essentially three areas that should be enhanced as recreation areas as depicted in Figure 3:

- The area south and adjacent to Tuscarora Creek, labeled 1
- The common area south of Tuscarora Creek to the west, labeled 2
- The common area south of Tuscarora Creek to the east, labeled 3

Active recreation is a topic that may also impact the density of dwelling units south of Tuscarora Creek. Although the Crescent District open space and amenity area requirements are technically satisfied, the active recreation needs of the proposed dwelling unit style and density are underserved. Staff recommends that Planning Commission should express the amount, types and location of appropriate active recreation.

Staff recommends that Area 1 be programmed with passive recreation due to potential safety concerns and to discourage activities in environmentally sensitive areas. Active recreation would be acceptable in the form of a walking trail and seating areas.

Staff recommends that Area 2 be increased to provide active play in the form of a small yard sized to accommodate a “pick-up game” of football or soccer, and interpretive play structures.

Due to the proximity of the land bay to the larger play area north of the Tuscarora Creek, Staff believes that common area is appropriately sized. The amenities within the space are the key element.

Discussion Question: Does the Planning Commission agree with staff or does the Planning Commission offer additional or different recommendations regarding the proposed active recreation areas locations and activities?

F. Phasing:

The Crescent Design District was developed to get mixed use development. As such, phasing of development in the Crescent District was not deemed necessary because it was anticipated that non-residential uses would be built in concert with residential uses in any given development. The Crescent Parke proposal has mixed use development north of Tuscarora Creek, but the area south of the creek is solely residential. The Applicant's proposed phasing plan does not require non-residential development to be phased with the construction of the residential component. To further the goals of the Crescent Design District, staff recommends that the phasing plan be changed to assure that the mixed use development north of the creek is phased with the residential uses south of the creek.

A phasing plan does not have to be 1:1, non-residential to residential mix. It could be a lesser mix (i.e. more residential to non-residential mix). However, there needs to be a recognition that this property is in the Crescent District and a mixed use development should be assured.

Discussion Question: Does the Planning Commission recommend that a phasing program be proffered which requires that applicant to provide commercial development concurrent with the residential development of the property?

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission recommendations to Town Council dated August 20, 2015.